

## EMBOUCHURE

Funnel and funeral lily,  
my father's trumpet  
nestles in blue velvet,

an oiled ear  
of steamwhistle metal  
Sunflower-brassy,

it arranges its cornucopia of air  
in still-life pall:  
a horn-of-plenty utterly empty,

mute and boldly bald.  
The mouthpiece gropes  
in perpetual O—

no breath to moo out  
a yellow lone post  
or blast a rattatat retort

like knuckles on doorknob.  
*Embouchure*, the word is—  
you hold the neck

with a death-grip and force  
lips in hard kiss against it.  
Tulip-tall, my father used to pace

our hall's slate  
playing boiled Brubeck jazz,  
penny-bright as a showgirl's tassel.

Now he cannot raise  
the breath and instead  
bends underwater

vowels from it—whales calving—  
then strands the golden knot  
in the instrument case.

He will not hold his face still enough;  
he will not hold his face.